

VZCZCXRO0153

PP RUEHBZ RUEHDU RUEHJO RUEHRN

DE RUEHMR #0630 3461822

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 121822Z DEC 07

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3477

INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 3878

UNCLAS MASERU 000630

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT ALSO FOR AF/S, AF/RSA;
GABARONE FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC LT

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: OPPOSITION CALLS OFF LIGHTLY OBSERVED GENERAL STRIKE

REF: MASERU 628

¶1. On December 12, the second day of an opposition-led general strike (reftel), Lesotho's five major opposition parties held a press conference to announce the suspension of the "stay-away" and launch further complaints against the Government of Lesotho.

All Basotho Convention Leader Thomas Thabane spoke for the five major opposition political parties at the event at which he denounced the GOL's removal from the airwaves of "People's Choice" FM, an independent radio station, during the strike. He named certain local retailers and taxi companies who he claimed violated the strike and called for boycott of their services. Thabane also stated that the general strike would resume in January, and that further unspecified "mass actions" would take place at that time.

¶2. COMMENT: Meanwhile, normalcy returned to Maseru's bustling streets on December 12. Despite the fact that the opposition "stay-away" remained in effect, commerce largely resumed. The opposition strike, designed to demonstrate the opposition's political muscle, disrupted public transportation over the course of two days -- but was largely a bust. END COMMENT.

MURPHY